DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 288 008 CE 048 833

TITLE Your Invitation to Success. Dropout Outreach Pilot Project. Final Report.
INSTITUTION Los Angeles Unified School District, CA. Div. of Adult and Occupational Education.
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 29p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Education; Competency Based Education; *Counseling Services; *Dropout Programs; Flexible Scheduling; Individualized Instruction; Nontraditional Education; Open Enrollment; *Outreach Programs; *Pilot Projects; *Student Recruitment
IDENTIFIERS *Los Angeles Unified School District CA

ABSTRACT

During the 1984-1985 school year, a pilot dropout outreach program was instituted by the Los Angeles (California) Unified School District's Division of Adult and Occupational Education in cooperation with the senior high schools division. Dropouts from the 1983-1984 school year were identified and were sent personal letters inviting them to return to the local community adult school, regional occupational center, or skills center to earn a high school diploma or to obtain job training. The initial mailing included a personal letter in English and Spanish, a brochure, and a postcard. Press conferences were held to coincide with each mailing, and separate follow-up mailings were sent to those who returned the postcard and to those who did not respond to the first mailing. Special counseling assistance was provided for students who responded to the mailings including discussion of opportunities for open enrollment, individualized competency-based learning programs, and flexible scheduling. Of 1,256 individuals to whom the initial mailing was sent, 215 (about 20 percent) responded positively to the invitation to return to school. The cost of the effort (not counting the time of regular division personnel) was $17.50 per student for recruitment and $100 per student for recovery. (Appendixes, comprising more than half the document, include samples of the letters, brochures, and postcards sent in the initial and follow-up mailings and examples of newspaper coverage of the project.) (MN)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED288008

Dropout Outreach Pilot Project

YOUR INVITATION TO SUCCESS

FINAL REPORT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M Young

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
DIVISION OF ADULT AND OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION
1984–85

CE048833

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The contributions of the following persons in assisting with the Dropout Outreach Pilot Project are gratefully acknowledged, with special thanks to the Project Director, Nancy McCoy, Teacher Adviser at Harbor Occupational Center:

Banning-Carson CAS	Del Beisell, Principal
	Howard Spilberg, Head Counselor
Jordan-Locke CAS	Alton Arnold, Principal
	Gertrude Hawkins, Asst. Principal
	Nick Seidita, Head Counselor
Manual Arts-Jefferson CAS	Frances Marsala, Principal
	Fred Reckker, Asst. Principal
North Hollywood CAS	Anne Stumpo-Sanchez, Principal
	Barbara Arney, Asst. Principal
	Don Gaskin, Head Counselor
	Fred Kuri, Counselor
	Fern Ellis, Teacher
Roosevelt-Bilingual CAS	Guadalupe Reyes, Principal
	June Aoki, Head Counselor
San Pedro Community CAS	Alek Haidos, Principal
	Horace Mansfield, Head Counselor
Abram Friedman Occupational Center	Lanny Nelms, Principal
	Richard Whiteman, Head Counselor
(Central Adult High)	Louise Roberts, Head Counselor
East Los Angeles Occupational Center	Steve Barba, Principal
	Carlos Delgado, Head Counselor
Harbor Occupational Center	Wesley Balbuena, Principal
	Henry Hurd, Asst. Principal
	Diane Baird, Head Counselor
East Los Angeles Skills Center	Pete Fernandez, Coordinator
	Nancy Karney, Teacher/Counselor
Pacoima Skills Center	Maureen Jensen, Coordinator
San Pedro Wilmington Skills Center	Ray Gonzales, Coordinator

Special thanks are also extended to Paul Possemato, Assistant Superintendent, Senior High Schools Division and the staffs of the participating high schools for their support of this project.

Gabriel Cortina
Assistant Superintendent
Division of Adult and Occupational Education

Camilla Kocol
Administrative Consultant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE. 2

II. ACTIVITIES. 3

III. PROJECT TASKS 4

IV. RESULTS 5

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 6

VI. SUMMARY 8

VII. APPENDIX. 9

Samples of letters, brochures, and postcards sent in the initial and follow up mailings. 10

Newspaper coverage. 17

I. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

During the 1984-85 school year, a pilot program was instituted by the Division of Adult and Occupational Education in cooperation with the Senior High Schools Division with the following objectives:

.identify high school dropouts from the 1983-84 school year

.send a personal letter to high school dropouts inviting them to return to the local community adult school, regional occupational center, or skills center to earn a high school diploma or to obtain job training.

Eight high schools volunteered to participate in the Dropout Outreach Pilot Program:

Carson
Jefferson
Jordan
Locke
North Hollywood
Polytechnic
Roosevelt
San Pedro

The adult schools, occupational centers, and skills centers participating in the Dropout Outreach Pilot Program include:

Adult Schools

Banning/Carson
Jordan/Locke
Manual Arts/Jefferson
North Hollywood/Polytechnic
Roosevelt
San Pedro

Skills Centers

East Los Angeles
Metropolitan
Pacoima
San Pedro/Wilmington
Watts

Occupational Centers

Abram Friedman
East Los Angeles
Harbor
North Valley

II. ACTIVITIES

A. Initial mailing included:

1. Personal letter in English
2. Personal letter in Spanish
3. Brochure
4. Postcard

B. Press conferences were held to coincide with each mailing.

C. Follow-up mailing included:

1. Second personal letter to those who returned the postcard
2. Second personal letter to those who did not respond to initial mailing.

D. Counseling Assistance

Special counseling assistance was provided for students who responded to the mailings including discussion of opportunities for open enrollment, individualized competency-based learning programs, and flexible scheduling.

E. Proposal for Special Funding

A proposal was written in response to an "RFP", Request for Proposal, from the Los Angeles Business Labor Council. A grant of $15,000 was subsequently awarded to pay student aides to assist with clerical duties.

III. PROJECT TASKS

A. Retrieval of names and addresses from high schools

1. In most cases computer data was not available.

2. Clerical aides hand copied names and addresses of L8 (early leavers).

B. Development of Materials to be Used in the Mailing

1. Composed letter and postcard; arranged for translation into Spanish and other languages.

2. Designed brochure and arranged for printing.

3. Designed and distributed student profile cards.

C. Clerical coordination of mailings

D. Distribution of returned postcards for follow up by school counselors

E. Evaluation of Student Responses

1. Sent follow up letter to those who did not respond to initial mailing.

2. Monitored the progress of the pilot project.

F. Coordinated media coverage

IV. RESULTS OF MAILINGS

A. Letters sent. . . . . .TOTAL: 1,256

Carson.	68
Jefferson	206
Jordan.	150
Locke	96
North Hollywood	218
Polytechnic	145
Roosevelt	248
San Pedro	125

B. Letters returned, address change. . . . . .TOTAL: 191 (15%)

Carson.	9 (13%)
Jefferson	38 (18%)
Jordan.	17 (11%)
Locke	9 (9%)
North Hollywood	42 (19%)
Polytechnic	23 (16%)
Roosevelt	42 (17%)
San Pedro	11 (9%)

C. Replied with postcard* . . . . . .TOTAL: 74 (7%)

Carson.	4 (6%)
Jefferson	17 (8%)
Jordan.	12 (8%)
Locke	3 (3%)
North Hollywood	3 (1%)
Polytechnic	0 No postcards in mailing
Roosevelt	23 (9%)
San Pedro	12 (10%)

D. Enrolled. . . . . .TOTAL: 136 (13%)

Carson.	11 (16%)
Jefferson	27 (13%)
Jordan.	10 (7%)
Locke	2 (2%)
North Hollywood	28 (13%)
Polytechnic	15 (10%)
Roosevelt	17 (7%)
San Pedro	26 (21%)

E. Total Responses*. . . . . .TOTAL: 215 (20%)

Carson.	15 (20%)
Jefferson	48 (23%)
Jordan.	25 (17%)
Locke	5 (5%)
North Hollywood	24 (15%)
Polytechnic	15 (10%)
Roosevelt	45 (18%)
San Pedro	38 (30%)

*Responses as of July 1, 1985; postcard responses and phone inquiries continue.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION #1: STUDENTS REMARKED THAT THE PERSONALIZED LETTERS CONVEYED A FEELING THAT SOMEONE CARED.

Comments on the returned postcards included the following:

"Thank you for careing (sic)."
"Thank you for your concern."
"Thank you for writing to me."
"Just help me get my high school diploma."
"I would like to hear from you again about all the opportunities that you have to offer me. Thank you."
"Anyone, thank you for yours' (sic) information."

Recommendations

1. Make letter brief, personal, warm, and positive and omit detailed information.

2. Designate one contact person with a single phone number.

3. Do not send the brochure. Brochures were not read due to the volume of information offered, too many career choices, and too many phone numbers.

CONCLUSION #2: STUDENTS WHO DROP OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL MOVE FREQUENTLY, CHANGE PHONE NUMBERS, OR HAVE NO PHONE.

Recommendations

1. Develop a process of obtaining from the senior high schools the names and addresses of recent dropouts as soon as they leave high school.

2. Send personalized letter to students as soon as they leave school.

3. Include in each mailing return postcard which requests the student's name, address, and phone number.

CONCLUSION #3: OF THE STUDENTS WHO RESPONDED, 69% RESPONDED WITHIN TWO WEEKS OF THE MAILING. ALMOST 100% RESPONDED WITHIN A MONTH.

Recommendation

Send follow up letters or make phone calls to students who do not respond to the initial letter within 30 days.

CONCLUSION #4: STUDENTS RESPONDED IN GREATER NUMBERS TO LETTERS MAILED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEMESTER.

For example, in the North Hollywood area, a pre-pilot letter was mailed before the start of the fall semester; thirty students (7%) responded. In the same area, the initial mailing of the pilot program was mailed after the start of the spring semester; thirteen students (3%) responded.

Recommendation

1. Concentrate mailings to coincide with traditional semesters:

   Fall mailing in August.
   Spring mailing in January.
   Summer mailing in June.

CONCLUSION #5: STUDENTS WHO RESPONDED BY POSTCARD EXPRESSED THEIR EDUCATIONAL GOALS AS FOLLOWS:

Diploma	60%
Job Training	58%
G.E.D.	26%
College	23%
Reading & Math Improvement	18%

VI. SUMMARY

The Dropout Outreach Pilot Project resulted in 20% of the targeted dropout population responding by phone, postcard, and/or a visit to a school. In other words, 215 young adults responded positively to the invitation to return to school and thus were given a second chance to achieve their educational goals.

In addition to the time given to this project by regular Division personnel, other expenses included money allocated for student aides, clerical support, printing, and mailing costs; averaging:

- $17.50 per student to recruit
- $100 per student to recover

If this project is extended to all 49 high schools, approximately 7,500 letters could be sent each year. Based upong the response rate in this project, it is possible that 1,500 dropouts will seek counseling and return to continue their education at local community adult schools, regional occupational centers and skills centers.

VI. APPENDIX

1. Samples of letters, brochures, and postcards sent in the initial and follow up mailings

2. Samples of newspaper coverage

Los Angeles Unified School District

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES, THIRD STREET ANNEX

1320 WEST THIRD STREET, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90017

TELEPHONE: (213) 625-6642, MAILING ADDRESS: BOX 3307, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90051

HARRY HANDLER
Superintendent of Schools

GABRIEL CORTINA
Assistant Superintendent,
Division of Adult and
Occupational Education

JAMES A. FIGUEROA
Director, Adult
Education Operations

LORETTA WALKER
Director, Occupational
Education Operations

LETTER #1

January 25, 1985

Tiburcio Flores
1111 San Pedro Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90001

Dear Tiburcio:

You have been away from school for some time. Are you happy with what you are doing? You may have worked at a variety of jobs. Are you satisfied? Have you asked yourself where you will be tomorrow or ten or twenty years from now? We do not have to tell you that for anyone to reach higher goals one needs better skills or more education.

We would like to invite you, Tiburcio, to return to a different kind of school - your local community adult school or job training center. Continuing your education at these schools will be easier for you because:

- classes are available from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.
- you may enroll at any time
- you will receive special counseling services
- you may choose your own education goals--a high school diploma, job training, or improvement of basic skills
- you may take as long as you need to complete your studies

Returning to school could change your life. Please call or come in and talk with a counselor and take advantage of these opportunities. As you know, better skills and more education will lead to a brighter future for you.

Enclosed is a brochure with specific information about each adult education program in your neighborhood.

Be sure to mention this letter when you call and bring the letter when you visit the school.

Sincerely,

Alton Arnold, Principal
Jordan-Locke Community Adult School

Lanny Nelms, Principal
Abram Friedman Occupational Center

Thad Newman, Coordinator
Watts Skills Center

Steve Reyes, Coordinator
Metropolitan Skills Center

Enclosure

Los Angeles Unified School District

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES, THIRD STREET ANNEX

1320 WEST THIRD STREET, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90017

TELEPHONE: (213) 625-6642, MAILING ADDRESS: BOX 3307, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90051

HARRY HANDLER
Superintendent of Schools

GABRIEL CORTINA
Assistant Superintendent,
Division of Adult and
Occupational Education

JAMES A. FIGUEROA
Director, Adult
Education Operations

LORETTA WALKER
Director, Occupational
Education Operations

LETTER #1 (SPANISH VERSION)

15 de enero de 1985

Estimado Estudiante:

Has estado fuera de la escuela por algun tiempo? Estas contento con lo que haces? Probablemente ya trabajaste en diferentes empleos. Estas satisfecho con eso? Te has preguntado donde vas a estar manana o dentro de diez o veinte anos? Sobra decirte que para alcanzar mayores objetivos se necesitan mejores habilidades o mas educacion.

Nos gustaria invitarte para que regreses a la escuela de la comunidad en donde vives, la escuela para adultos, o el centro de entrenamiento para empleos. Te sera mas facil continuar tu educacion en estas escuelas porque:

- Las clases son de 8:30 a.m. a 9:30 p.m.
- Puedes inscribirte cualquier dia
- Recibiras servicios especiales de orientacion.
- Puedes elegir tus propias metas educativas: diploma de secundaria, entrenamiento para empleo, o mejorar las destrezas basicas.
- Puedes tomar el tiempo que sea necesario para completar tus estudios.

El regreso a la escuela puede cambiar tu vida. Por favor comunicate con nosotros o visita la escuela y habla con uno de nuestros consejeros para que puedas aprovechar estas oportunidades. Como has de saber, mejores destrezas y mas educacion te llevaran a un futuro mejor.

1. Estamos anexando un folelo con la informacion especifica acerca de cada programa para la educacion del adulto que hay en tu comunidad.

2. No dejes de mencionar esta carta cuando te comuniques con nosotros y traerla cuando visites la escuela.

Atentamente,

Los Directores de las Escuelas

Los Angeles Unified School District

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES, THIRD STREET ANNEX

1320 WEST THIRD STREET, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90017

TELEPHONE (213) 625-6642, MAILING ADDRESS: BOX 3307, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90051

HARRY HANDLER
Superintendent of Schools

GABRIEL CORTINA
Assistant Superintendent, Division of Adult and Occupational Education

JAMES A. FIGUEROA
Director, Adult Education Operations

LORETTA WALKER
Director, Occupational Education Operations

DRAFT: NEW LETTER #1

July 12, 1985

Tiburcio Flores
1111 San Pedro Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90001

Dear Tiburcio:

My name is Nancy McCoy, counselor at Harbor Occupational Center, and I am concerned about you, your happiness and your future. What if it were possible for you to complete your education and receive your diploma without having to attend high school?

At our school, you choose your own schedule; day or evening, work at your own pace toward that diploma, and what's most important, attend classes that interest you and lead to a good job.

Tiburcio, I would like to talk with you. I can be reached at (213) 547-5551 during the day or Thursday evenings.

Ask for me, or if you prefer, return the enclosed postcard with your number. I'll call you. It's important, John, that we discuss the possibilities of your returning to school. Together we can plan for your high school diploma, for job training, or for both.

Sincerely,

Nancy McCoy, Counselor
Harbor Occupational Center

Enclosure

Los Angeles Unified School District

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES, THIRD STREET ANNEX

1320 WEST THIRD STREET, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90017

TELEPHONE (213) 625-6643, MAILING ADDRESS: BOX 3307, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90051

HARRY HANDLER
Superintendent of Schools

GABRIEL CORTINA
Assistant Superintendent, Division of Adult and Occupational Education

JAMES A. FIGUEROA
Director, Adult Education Operations

LORETTA WALKER
Director, Occupational Education Operations

FOLLOW UP MAILING: SECOND PERSONAL LETTER TO THOSE WHO RETURNED POSTCARD

April 9, 1985

Tiburcio Flores
1111 San Pedro Boulevard
San Pedro, CA 90714

Dear Tiburcio:

Great. You've made my day! You returned the postcard we recently sent you about a high school diploma and job training. I would like to sit down and talk with you about how I can help, but I'm having trouble finding phone numbers.

I am Howard Spilberg at Banning-Carson Community Adult School and I want to talk with you. I can be reached at (213) 830-3923 between 1:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Ask for me. It's important that we discuss the possibilities of your returning to school.

I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Howard Spilberg
Head Counselor

Los Angeles Unified School District

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES, THIRD STREET ANNEX

1320 WEST THIRD STREET, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90017

TELEPHONE: (213) 625-6642, MAILING ADDRESS: BOX 3307, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90051

HARRY HANDLER
Superintendent of Schools

GABRIEL CORTINA
Assistant Superintendent, Division of Adult and Occupational Education

JAMES A. FIGUEROA
Director, Adult Education Operations

LORETTA WALKER
Director, Occupational Education Operations

FOLLOW UP MAILING: SECOND PERSONAL LETTER
TO THOSE WHO DID NOT RESPOND TO FIRST MAILING

April 22, 1985

Lupe Ramos
525 Marine Avenue
San Pedro, CA 90231

Dear Lupe:

You are #1 on my list. To those of us who work for the Los Angeles Unified School District, you are a very important person. Last January we wrote to you hoping to find out how things were going. We are still very interested in you and what you have been doing since you left school.

Lupe, you can return to school, choose your own schedule, day or evening, work at your own pace, and what's important, attend classes that interest you.

I am Horace Mansfield, and I would like to talk with you. I can be reached at 547-4425 between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, or Monday and Wednesday evenings. Ask for me, or if you prefer, return the enclosed postcard with your number. I'll call you. It's important that we discuss the possibilities of your returning to school. We can plan for your high school diploma, for job training, or for both!

Sincerely,

Horace Mansfield
Head Counselor

Enclosure

SAMPLE POSTCARDS

We Want To Hear From You!

Did you ever receive your high school diploma? .....Oyes Ono
Do you plan to continue your education? .....Oyes Ono
What are your goals? .....OReading & Math Improvement
OHigh School Diploma
OG.E.D.
OJob Training
OCollege
Would you like a counselor to call? .....Oyes Ono
Name_____
Address_____
Phone_____
Remarks:_____
_____

Thank you for returning this postcard.
POSTAGE IS FREE!

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 33758 LOS ANGELES, CA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

Los Angeles Unified School District
Division of Adult and Occupational Education
Room 505
P.O. BOX 3307
Los Angeles, California 90051

NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES

¡QUEREMOS SABER DE TI!

¿Recibiste ya tu diploma de secundaria? .....OSí ONo
¿Planeas continuar tu educación .....OSí ONo
¿Cuáles son tus metas? .....OMejorar la Lectura y Matemáticas
ODiploma de Secundaria
ODiploma en Educación General (G.E.D.)
OEntrenamiento para Empleos
OColegio/Universidad

¿Ya estás inscrito en la escuela? .....OSí ONo
Si es así, ¿en dónde? _____
¿Estás trabajando? .....OSí ONo
Si es así ¿estás contento con tu empleo? .....OSí ONo
¿Quisieras ir a la escuela mientras trabajas? .....OSí ONo
Comentarios: _____
_____

Muchas gracias por regresar esta tarjeta postal.
¡EL FRANQUEO ES GRATIS!

STUDENT PROFILE CARD

DROPOUT OUTREACH PROJECT
Student Profile

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ BIRTH DATE _____

HIGH SCHOOL _____

DATE OF CONTACT WITH SCHOOL/CENTER _____

INITIAL CONTACT: ☐ Phone ☐ In person ☐ Letter

Did student enroll? yes ___ no ___

Program: _____

Was student referred to another school or center? __yes __no

School/Center _____

-over-

REMARKS: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

NEWS-PILOT

THE ONLY DAILY NEWSPAPER SERVING THE HARBOR AREA EXCLUSIVELY

57th year / No. 269 San Pedro, California January 25, 1985 832-0221

L.A. schools begin push to re-enroll dropouts

By Colleen Bentley-Adler
Staff writer

A major push to locate students who have "fallen through the cracks" and dropped out of school has been instituted in the Harbor Area.

In an attempt to encourage dropouts to return to one of several adult education centers in San Pedro, letters were sent this week to 250 students who dropped out of San Pedro High School and/or Carson High School in the 1983-84 school year.

"We're trying to recover those who have dropped out," Camilla Kocol, project director for the "Dropout Outreach" pilot program, said.

The re-enrollment project is a joint effort of the San Pedro Community Adult School, Harbor Occupational Center, the San Pedro/Wilmington Skills Center and the Banning-Carson Community Adult School in conjunction with secondary schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Five other district high schools and their area adult schools soon will be involved in the project, she said.

Despite both being administered by the school district, this is the first cooperative effort of the secondary and adult schools, according to Mike Hurd, assistant principal at Harbor Occupational Center.

School board President John Greenwood of San Pedro applauded the program and the joining together of high school and adult school with the common goal of locating and educating dropouts.

"It's a very good program," Greenwood said Thursday. "It just absolutely makes sense; it seems crazy to me that they haven't done it before."

If she had to deliver a message to dropouts, Kocol said, it would be "to let them know that it's OK to return to school."

At each of the adult centers, the returning students will have the services of a counselor and individualized attention so they can work at their own pace and not at that of their classmates, whether it's for a high school diploma or for vocational training, Kocol said.

"We'll be giving them an adult experience, not a high school experience," Dianne Baird, Harbor Occupational Center head counselor, said.

"Often, their one fear is that they failed in high school and they're afraid they'll fail here.

"But this is a positive program and it's what the community needs."

"With proper teaching, these people can succeed," Alek Haidos, principal of San Pedro Adult School, said.

Many of those who left high school before graduation cannot read well and are deficient in some of the basic skills, Haidos and other adult educators said at a meeting at the occupational center this week.

"We know it's tough for some of these people," especially when they cannot read well and they know it, Haidos said.

What Kocol sees as one of the keys to the success of the program is its flexibility: adult classes are offered at the centers from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. and students can enroll continually -- they don't have to start a class at the beginning of a semester as is the norm at traditional high schools.

"They can come when it suits their needs," she said. "They're taken where they are and move at their own pace; we're not expecting them to be like the person next to them."

Mike Fernandez, production manager of new construction at Todd Shipyards, who also sits on the occupational center's advisory board, said his company supports the project.

"Dropouts are the ones knocking on our door looking for work," he said. "We'd much rather have better-trained people."

Basically, all the project directors know about the 250 people to whom they have sent letters is that they left high school -- there's no record after that.

"We're not assuming that all of them are unemployed," occupational center Principal John McCants said, "but we are dealing with those human beings who have fallen through the cracks."

Because the educators want to trace dropouts further back than the 1983-84 school year, they secured a $15,000 grant from the Los Angele Business Labor Council to hire high school students as aides to go through school records, drop-

Dropouts / A3

Dropouts

From page A1

out rates are not computerized nor centralized.

But that may change — depending on the upcoming actions of the school board. An extensive study of dropouts was completed recently and the results and accompanying recommendations went to district Superintendent Harry Handler earlier this week.

One section of the dropout prevention/recovery program deals with a proposed student data information system to keep track of all students and provide more accurate figures on the subsequent activities of those who transfer, dropout or return.

Assistant superintendent Robert Martin said Thursday that he cannot discuss specifics of the study because it has not been approved by the board yet.

As such, he would not reveal the district's dropout rate nor the methods the district will use to keep or re-enroll students.

The last reported figures released by the district show that only 58 percent of the 10th-graders enrolled in 1979 graduated from their same schools three years later.

The 42 percent dropout or "attrition rate" does not reflect a true dropout rate, district administrators have said, because many of the students could have transferred to other district schools, moved outside the Los Angeles district or enrolled in private schools.

Because of the high numbers, though, curbing the dropout rate is "one of the district's top priorities for this year," Martin said.

Slowing the rate is high on the adult school priority list, according to Kocol.

"We've got to work together to keep the kids in school, somewhere," she said. "We have to let them and their parents know of their options."

Sending out the letters is one of those options because "we can't pin a note on a high school kid's chest," McCants said, drawing laughter from the educators.

Turning serious, the educators attempted to profile the dropout, and concluded that no one, typical person emerges.

As they sat in the round-table discussion, however, each offered characteristics common to the dropout and definitions of who drops out: They often have a poor command of English; low basic skills; must work to help out the family; are a teen-age mother; come from single-parent families; have two working parents; not as many "hooky cops;" high schools fours times as large as two decades ago where a student "just gets lost;" more pressure in the form of drugs and outside activities and societal changes.

And many, according to Baird, "are just very bright and bored in school."

"I don't know if there are more than before, but I think we're more aware of the problem," Haidos said.

All agreed that the presence of the various options — the adult school, skills centers, continuation and occupational schools — has helped stem the dropout rate.

Kocol said no target has been set as to how many of the 250 contacted they hope to hear from, but said a mini-project tested in September in North Hollywood in which 350 letters were mailed resulted in a 12 percent response rate with 3 percent of those eventually enrolling to obtain diplomas or gain skills.

Fernandez said those with skills have much better opportunities when it comes to working at Todd.

"It's easy to hire 50 guys to move sand," he said, "but it's much better to hire 50 who know why you have to move the sand."

A dropout, project assistant director Nancy McCoy said, "has no chance . . . There are 250 people lined up for any job, where 30 years ago, there were jobs for dropouts. Not now."

George A. Reynolds III/Daily News

"It's a hard world out there (for teen dropouts)," says Anne Stumpo Sanchez, principal of North Hollywood Community Adult School.

Adult schools lure dropouts back into education program

By B.J. PALERMO
Daily News Staff Writer

Jose Avalos had been lying around the house for more than a year when he got an invitation from the Los Angeles Unified School District.

"Are you happy with what you are doing?" asked the letter. "Returning to school could change your life."

About 2,000 high school dropouts will receive such invitations this month in the district's effort to entice them to enroll in adult education classes.

But administrators, who express alarm over the rising dropout rate, say there is no alternative to leaving school for students such as Avalos who do not fit into the college preparatory program. Only after they have given up are those teenagers offered other options.

"The philosophy upon which they set up the high school program is incorrect," said Camilla Kocol, the district's administrative consultant for adult and occupational education. "The system is very traditional and rigid. All students must do the same things. There is no allowance for individual differences."

Now enrolled in the adult education program, 18-year-old Avalos and other students who left school are learning vocational skills and even are studying the academic subjects they once shunned in the regular program.

"I was sleeping all day and not doing anything," Avalos said. "I came back because I wanted to do something for the future." Now he is taking a machine shop course at the Pacoima Skills Center. It is part of the Dropout Outreach Project that includes the center, North Hollywood Community Adult School, North Valley Occupational Center and Francis Polytechnic High School.

Citywide, the pilot project that began last September includes five other high schools and nearby skills and occupational centers.

Darrin Miranda, 18, said he left North Hollywood High because he was bored. He wanted to learn how to fix airplanes, but the school curriculum seemed to have little bearing on his goals or his life.

Although more money for counselors has been proposed, the problem is not a lack of funds but the educators' attitude toward students who do not fit the desired mold, said 17-year-old Dawn Ducharme, who now is seeking her high school diploma in adult school.

"In high school they made you feel like you were not a person," Ducharme said. "The teachers didn't pay attention to the kids that didn't do as good as the ones who got A's and B's. They think because we don't do as well we don't care."

Of the 360,000 students enrolled in the district's adult and occupational education classes, about 72,000 or 20 percent were high school dropouts. But the district has no way of counting the number of students who leave school.

A district study released last month shows more than 44 percent of the Los Angeles students who were sophomores in 1981 left school by June, 1984. San Fernando Valley schools with the highest attrition rates are San Fernando, 56.4 percent; Francis Poly, 47.8 percent; Sylmar, 45.5 percent; and Reseda, 43.2 percent.

But those percentages represent an overall attrition rate that includes students who moved to other schools or districts. They do not indicate how many students left school and did not return.

Adult education programs traditionally represent a last opportunity for older high school dropouts. But this is the first time the program has targeted teenagers, said Anne Sampo Sanchez, principal of North Hollywood Community Adult School.

"We went back through computer printouts for last year. But no records have been kept from year to year," she said.

Some officials believe the dropout rate may be much higher than current statistics indicate. And the outreach program is no more than "a quick fix" for a larger problem, said Gabriel Cortina, the district's assistant superintendent for adult and vocational education.

"There still is only one diploma system for all students," Cortina said.

le Rock Sentinel
"THE COMMUNITY FOUNDED UPON A ROCK"
SATURDAY, FEB. 23, 1985 BUSINESS 259-6200 – CIRCULATION 259-6254 16 PAGES 25C PER ISSUE 95C MONTHLY

School district acts on school dropouts

Prevention, return options considered

The Los Angeles Unified School District is proceeding on several fronts to deal with the problem of dropouts, after a task force study which indicated that more than four out of every ten students who entered high school in the 10th grade fail to graduate with their class.

The board is expected to take a look Monday night at a $1 million program designed to take efforts to deal with the program at the 12 high schools at which the dropout/attrition rate is the worst. One of the 12 schools in the program is Roosevelt High, on the eastside.

The dropout prevention effort is geared around intensive counseling and vocational guidance, with a team approach by district staffers emphasized.

Board members are expected to consider during the debate on the program ideas which could be utilized at other schools not among the highest in attrition, but suffering the effects of pupil loss at nearly as high a rate.

Adult school and occupational center leaders from the eastside joined Thursday to discuss another program now underway in the LA Unified School District.

FUNDING

Funded in part with a $53,000 grant from the Business Labor Council, the outreach program is being developed jointly by the school district's adult school division and senior high division.

Project coordinator Camilla Kocol said the Dropout Outreach Effort involves sending a packet to former students who have left school, with a personalized letter in English and Spanish, a brochure explaining programs which are available to returning students, and a return post card.

This is followed up a month later by another mailing, and after that a personal call.

Students who respond—and Kocol said the 17 percent response experienced in an earlier test of the program was considered good for a mail order campaign—receive counseling at their adult school and are referred to the program or combination of programs which most closely meet their needs.

This could involve returning to regular high school, enrolling at an adult school or occupational center, or a combination of elements, Kocol said.

LOCAL SCHOOLS

Local schools participating in the program are Roosevelt High, Roosevelt Adult School, East LA Occupational Center and East LA Skills Center.

The school officials present emphasized that all student dropouts are invited to explore the possibility of returning to school, by contacting any high school, adult school or occupational center.

Steve Barba, principal of the East Los Angeles Occupational Center, said that his school offers continuous open enrollment, so students can find programs waiting for them at any time they enroll.

Two former dropouts who returned to school were present at the presentation and spoke about their decisions to come back.

Marta Martinez said she returned to school when she decided she'd made a bad decision to leave for a low-paying clerical job on the outside. She will be receiving her diploma in June.

Roy Alvarado said he left school in 1982, decided to return, and now hopes to become a school administrator.

Kocol said the dropout outreach program is now being funded by adult education, but is seeking community assistance like the grant received from the Business Council. A decision will be made at the end of the year as to the cost and effectiveness of the program, she said.

The adult school and senior high officials present pictured a future in which a school might be open from 7 a.m. to midnight on weekdays, with Saturday classes offered as well, allowing students maximum flexibility to plan education around work and family responsibilities.

Los Angeles Times SOUTH BAY

Sunday, January 27, 1985.

School Program Aims to Reclaim Dropouts and Fill Their Needs

By BOB WILLIAMS, *Times Staff Writer*

SAN PEDRO—"You have been away from school for some time," the letter begins. "Are you happy with what you are doing? Have you asked yourself where you will be tomorrow or 10 or 20 years from now?"

The letter, which was sent out last week to 213 recent dropouts from high schools in San Pedro and Carson, goes on to invite the former students to "return to a different kind of school" that could provide them with the skills and education they need for a "brighter future."

The South Bay dropouts are the first of thousands that the Los Angeles Unified School District plans to contact through "Dropout Outreach," a pilot project designed to deal with what officials say is a growing problem in educating a diverse and often restless school population.

Need for Program

State school officials say one out of five youths drop out of high school, leaving them without adequate skills to find jobs or otherwise cope with the demands of society. Recent reports suggest that the loss rate may be much higher among immigrant youths who cannot contend with language and cultural barriers, on top of the personal and family problems usually blamed for quitting school.

"The need is for alternative programs for kids who fall through the cracks of the regular system," said Camilla Kocol, director of the outreach project, which she described as the most extensive attempt ever made by the district to recover dropouts. "But first we have to reach them."

The mailings designed to do that include a "personalized" letter to the former student in English (and his or her native language, if there is doubt about the English-speaking ability of the family), a brochure outlining vocational and remedial programs waiting for the returnees and a postage-free post card. If the post card is not returned in a month, Kocol said, a second mailing will be made, followed in two to four weeks by telephone calls to youths who still do not respond.

Emphasis on Prevention

"We want to show these kids that we haven't forgotten them and that we care about what happens to them," Kocol said. "If we can do that much, the effort will be worthwhile, even in cases where we don't succeed in bringing the youngster back."

She said the mailings will be extended to other areas of the sprawling district—East Los Angeles, North Hollywood and the San Fernando Valley and the South-Central area—as the pilot program develops. Attempts to reach an estimated 6,000 former students will be made in the initial phases, she said, and a full-scale effort could eventually be directed

Please see DROPOUTS, Page 3

DROPOUTS: Plan for Their Needs

Continued from Page 1

upwards of 25,000 dropouts from among about 121,000 students in the district's high schools.

In the longer term, Kocol said, the program will place increasing emphasis on efforts to identify and head off students who are most likely to drop out of school.

Further computerization of student records in the next year or so will enable the district to keep better track of dropouts and help eliminate from the outreach program those who have enrolled in other school systems, moved away, or are otherwise not in need of district services, Kocol said.

She said the program will utilize existing occupational, skill and adult training facilities, but the plan calls for designating counselors and other personnel at each school to meet the special needs of dropouts.

Typical Problems

Dianne Baird, head counselor at the Harbor Occupational Center here, said offering the dropouts a different school setting is an important factor in luring back those with a history of often-painful failure in regular high schools.

"What we're offering them is an adult experience, away from peer pressures," she said. "We will take them where they are, provide any special counseling and make-up studies they may need, and help them to move forward toward their goals."

Nancy McCoy, assistant project director and a counselor at Harbor, said a typical dropout may lack basic survival and communication skills and often suffers from learning disabilities and low self-esteem. A disruptive home life, an unplanned pregnancy, drug use or any number of other personal and family traumas can end the high school experience for some teen-agers, she said.

In the larger picture, Harbor Principal John McCants suggested, more youths may be dropping out because of overcrowding in the schools, poor classroom discipline, the low priority placed on education in some families, "horrendous changes in society that the kids just can't keep up with, and maybe the fact that we have fewer hooky cops these days."

Michael A. Fernandez, a Todd Shipyards executive active in promoting occupational training programs, said, "Many dropouts come knocking at our door, but usually we have to tell them that they don't have the skills we need. From the employer's standpoint, I'd say we need a strong program like this to get these kids back in school."

The educators rejected stereotypes of dropouts as "incapable, low-IQ juveniles" best left to whatever fate awaits them outside the school grounds.

"By and large, these are worthwhile kids with the potential of contributing to society," said Alek Haidos, principal of the San Pedro Community Adult School. "With the proper training to bring up the level of their skills and self confidence, they can succeed in the world out there."

Camille Kocol, director of the project to reach dropouts.

Dianne Baird, head counselor, Harbor Occupational Center.

HARRY CHASE / Los Angeles Times

Discussing "Dropout Outreach," a project for reclaiming students, are, from left, Michael A. Hernandez of Todd Shipyards; Alek Haidos, principal of San Pedro Community Adult School; Fred Hildebrand, industrial education coordinator at Harbor Occupational Center.

BELVEDERE CITIZEN
The Only Newspaper Publishing
Belvedere District News
32ND YEAR—NO 9 | 3590 E FIRST STREET, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90063 | WEDNESDAY FEB 27 1985 | PHONE 269 6246 | 24 PAGES | 25C PER ISSU

School district attempts to deal with dropouts

The Los Angeles Unified School District is proceeding on several fronts to deal with the problem of dropouts, after a task force study which indicated that more than four out of every ten students who entered high school in the 10th grade fail to graduate with their class.

The board was expected to take a look Monday night at a $1 million program designed to take efforts to deal with the program at the 12 high schools at which the dropout/attrition rate is the worst. One of the 12 schools in the program is Roosevelt High, on the eastside.

The dropout prevention effort is geared around intensive counseling and vocational guidance, with a team approach by district staffers emphasized.

Board members were expected to consider during the debate on the program ideas which could be utilized at other schools out among the highest in attrition, but suffering the effects of pupil loss at nearly as high a rate.

Adult school and occupational center leaders from the eastside joined Thursday to discuss another program now underway in the LA Unified School District.

FUNDING

Funded in part with a $5,000 grant from the Business Labor Council, the outreach program is being developed jointly by the school district's adult school division and senior high division.

Project coordinator Camilla Kocsi said the Dropout Outreach Effort involves sending a packet to former students who have left school, with a personalized letter in English and Spanish, a brochure explaining programs which are available to returning students, and a return post

(Continued on Page A2)

Dropouts...

(Continued from Page 1)

card.

This is followed up a month later by another mailing, and after that a personal call.

Students who respond—and Kocsi said the 17 percent response experienced in an earlier test of the program was considered good for a mail order campaign—receive counseling at their adult school and are referred to the program or combination of programs which most closely meet their needs.

This could involve returning to regular high school, enrolling at an adult school or occupational center, or a combination of elements, Kocsi said.

LOCAL SCHOOLS

Local schools participating in the program are Roosevelt High, Roosevelt Adult School, East LA Occupational Center and East LA Skills Center.

The school officials present emphasized that all student dropouts are invited to explore the possibility of returning to school, by contacting any high school, adult school or occupational center.

Steve Barbo, principal of the East Los Angeles Occupational Center, said that his school offers continuous open enrollment, so students can find programs waiting for them at any time they enroll.

Two former dropouts who returned to school were present at the presentation and spoke about their decisions to come back.

Maria Martinez said she returned to school when she decided she'd made a bad decision to leave for a low-paying clerical job on the outside. She will be receiving her diploma in June.

Ray Alvarado said he left school in 1982, decided to return, and now hopes to become a school administrator.

Kocsi said the dropout outreach program is now being funded by adult education, but is seeking community assistance like the grant received from the Business Council. A decision will be made at the end of the year as to the cost and effectiveness of the program, she said.

The adult school and senior high officials present pictured a future in which a school might be open from 7 a.m. to midnight on weekdays, with Saturday classes offered as well, allowing students maximum flexibility to plan education around work and family responsibilities.

Dropouts may be invited to return to high schools

By ANNE VALDESPINO
Daily News Staff Writer

Students who drop out of eastern San Fernando Valley high schools soon may be receiving personal invitations to come back to school in the mail.

School board member Roberta Weintraub announced Friday that the Los Angeles Unified School District is extending a program known as "Dropout Outreach." Under the program, letters are mailed to students asking why they have dropped out of school and urging them to return.

The district has had a 17 percent response in North Hollywood and Sun Valley and a 10 percent response in the Harbor area with the program, Weintraub said.

More letters are being mailed this week to the eastern and south central areas of Los Angeles and the eastern San Fernando Valley, she said.

Teachers said it is the personal emphasis of this program that makes it successful.

"We send letters in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Armenian and other languages," said Anne Stumpo Sanchez, North Hollywood Adult School principal.

The program is addressing a major concern of the Board of Education, Weintraub said.

"The dropout problem is incredible," she said. "It is 50 percent in many of our area high schools."

The outreach project, sponsored by the Division of Adult and Occupational Education, mails a letter that addresses each dropout personally. It asks questions such as, "Are you happy with what you are doing?" and "Have you asked yourself where you will be or 10 or 20 years from now?"

The letter also describes features of the district's continuing education program that is different from traditional high schools. Classes are held from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., counseling is available, students may work toward a high school diploma through job training or improvement of basic skills.

LA OPINION

ado en 1926 • Diario Popular Independiente • Los Angeles, California, viernes 22 de febrero de 1985 Número 158

En Boyle Heights

En marcha plan para combatir alto índice de abandono escolar

Por Alberto Hauffen
Reportero de LA OPINION

En las próximas semanas, 253 jóvenes residentes en el sector de Boyle Heights que abandonaron la secundaria Roosevelt en los últimos años recibirán una carta de la escuela en la que se les pregunta si están satisfechos con la decisión tomada.

La respuesta, con toda seguridad, reflejará que para la mayoría de esos jóvenes la vida no pinta precisamente "color de rosa," según datos recabados por oficiales del sistema escolar de Los Angeles.

"Sabemos que la mayoría de esos jóvenes pasa por momentos difíciles porque no pueden encontrar un empleo prometedor a falta de la educación secundaria," dijo ayer Camille Kocok, de la división de educación para adultos del distrito escolar.

Aunque no existen datos precisos, se estima que por lo menos un 42% de los estudiantes angelinos abandonan la secundaria antes de obtener el diploma, informó Kocol en su reunión con oficiales de la secundaria Roosevelt donde se inició ayer la primera fase de un programa piloto para rescatar a los ex alumnos de Boyle Heights.

Las misivas dirigidas a los desertores de la Roosevelt son sólo una parte de un total de más de dos mil cartas que el distrito está enviando a los estudiantes que han abandonado la secundaria en las áreas del Este de Los

Pasa a la página 11

a buscar un empleo para contribuir al sostenimiento de sus hogares. Otros simplemente se cansan de los programas de estudio. Es difícil precisar la causa del abandono," manifestó Henry Ronquillo, director de la Roosevelt.

Sin embargo, los informes recopilados por el distrito demuestran que el desempleo entre los desertores es dos veces mayor que el encontrado entre los individuos que han terminado su educación secundaria.

El programa piloto iniciado el mes pasado en una secundaria de San Pedro, además de la carta en inglés y el idioma dominante en el hogar del ex alumno, incluye folletos con información sobre programas educativos impartidos por centros vocacionales que combinan el aprendizaje de un oficio con la educación secundaria.

"Lo que más nos interesa es que esos jóvenes regresen a analizar su actual nivel educacional con los consejeros de sus escuelas. No importa a qué escuela decidan ir, pero sí importa que terminen la secundaria," comentó Lupe Reyes, directora del programa de educación para adultos de la Roosevelt.

Los resultados preliminares obtenidos en San Pedro auguran que el programa financiado con un fondo de 15,000 dólares contribuidos por el consejo de los sectores empresarial y laboral de Los Angeles dará buenos resultados, según Kocol.

Después de la fase inicial se harán otros intentos para atraer a los desertores de secundaria con llamadas telefónicas para tratar de convencerlos a que regresen a continuar sus estudios.

En marcha...

Viene de la página 1

Angeles, San Pedro, Carson, centrosur de Los Angeles y el este del Valle de San Fernando.

Con la carta, firmada por el director del plantel, los estudiantes recibirán una invitación para que consideren la posibilidad de regresar a la escuela para terminar sus estudios.

A pesar de que el problema de la deserción escolar no está confinado al área de Los Angeles, tradicionalmente el problema ha sido más agudo en las comunidades menos ricas. Más de la mitad de las 48 secundarias del sistema escolar de la ciudad experimentaron una deserción superior al 40% el año pasado solamente.

"La mayoría de esas escuelas se encuentran en comunidades económicamente desaventajadas," apuntó Kocol.

"Muchos de ellos (desertores) son de familias de escasos recursos económicos y se ven forzados

"Queremos rescatar a esos estudiantes. Deben saber que existen otras alternativas que le permitirán obtener mejores empleos," dijo Kocol. Agregó que, según sean los resultados obtenidos en el programa piloto, el distrito tiene planes para extender dichos programas a otras escuelas de la ciudad.

28 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Senior High Schools Division News

Los Angeles Unified School District

Volume III, No. 7 April 1985

High School Dropout Is Now An "A" Student

by Nancy McCoy
Harbor Occupational Center

"You have been away from school for some time," the letter begins. "Are you happy with what you are doing?"

The letter, sent to high school dropouts throughout the District, goes on to invite the former students to "return to a different kind of school" that could provide them with the skills and education they need for a "brighter future."

Angela Parrish is one high school dropout preparing for a "brighter future." Angela responds well to the "hands-on" vocational training offered at Harbor Occupational Center located in San Pedro. "I didn't get good grades in high school," Angela says "but I'm making A's here." For Angela, her Nursing Assistant teacher, Mrs. Leatherwood, makes all the difference in the world. "She shows me," says Angela, "then I try it and she explains again until I do it right."

Angela plans to work on her GED at San Pedro Adult School, after her graduation from Harbor Occupational Center this spring.